



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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August 29, 2017

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

ROUTE TO: District Registrars, District Homeless Liaisons, Principals, School Nurses and All
Staff Involved in Enrollment

FROM: Peggy McDonald, Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Learning Supports and Specialized Services

SUBJECT: Reminder: Enrollment of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Annually, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) provides guidance to assist school districts in fulfilling federal and state requirements regarding the enrollment of students who are experiencing homelessness, including unaccompanied youth. This is done to ensure that these children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other students. New Jersey school districts should review this memo and undertake steps to revise practices and/or policies that may act as a barrier to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success of homeless children and youth in school.

Children and youth experiencing homelessness often do not have the documents ordinarily required for school enrollment, such as proof of residency, school and immunization records, and birth certificates. Many students, especially those living in "doubled-up" situations, will not be able to provide proof of residency. Though proof of residency affidavits may be intended to ensure that only eligible students are able to enroll in a district school, the use of such forms as a requirement for enrollment, or continued enrollment, constitutes an educational barrier for students who do not reside in permanent living situations. Therefore, the requirement to present the aforementioned and other documents normally needed for school enrollment is waived for students experiencing homelessness.

School districts must immediately enroll or continue to enroll students while the district reviews the parent's and/or student's claims. If the district disputes the claims of homelessness, it must continue the student's enrollment for the duration of the dispute resolution process, as described at *N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2.7*. The requirement for immediate enrollment also applies to unaccompanied homeless youth who lack proof of guardianship.

Please distribute this memorandum to principals, school nurses and physicians, and all staff involved in the student enrollment process.

Should you have questions or require additional information on the enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness, contact your [Executive County Superintendent of Schools](#), or the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs at (609) 984-4974 or homeless@doe.state.nj.us.

c: Members, State Board of Education
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